



United States Department of the Interior
National Business Center
Alaska Region/Aviation Management
4405 Lear Court
Anchorage, Alaska 99502-1032



AM OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM (OPM) 06-AR-16

Subject: Exception To DOI Aviation Policy To Facilitate Aviation Support To The
U.S. FWS Research Station at Tern Island (French Frigate Shoals)

Effective Date: February 1, 2006

Supersedes: January 5, 2005

Distribution: A and B

Expiration Date: December 31, 2006

- .1 Purpose. This OPM authorizes exception to Departmental Aviation Policy as contained in 350 DM 1.2, 351 DM 1.1C, and 351 DM 3.3C. It also contains time lines for completion of a risk assessment.
- .2 Authority. This policy is established by the Alaska Regional Director, Aviation Management (AM) in accordance with the authority of 350 DM 1.9 and the delegation of authority as contained in AM Instruction 100-3 (dated 9-4-02).
- .3 Background.
 - A. Background. Aviation Support to the FWS Research Station at Tern Island has been performed for most of the last twenty years. The conduct of the support flights has continually evolved toward total compliance with 14 CFR and DOI Aviation Policy. During the evolution toward this goal, many proactive risk mitigation techniques have been developed and implemented. Some examples are: the use of a Second In Command, utilization of PPE (flight helmet) for takeoff and landings at Tern Island, and improved navigation and communication systems. A variety of exceptions to policy have been previously approved by several AM Directors to facilitate the use of vendor procured aircraft support. Currently three exceptions to policy are required to allow the award of a contract that conforms to DOI policy.



.4 Exceptions.

- A. 351 DM 1.2 requires civil aircraft to comply with 14 CFR as well as the Departmental Manual. The contract as awarded will not, and requires AM approved exceptions.
- B. 351 DM 1.1C requires that Vendors shall operate in accordance with their Operations Specification (OPS SPEC'S). Pearl Pacific Enterprises, the vendor that is contracted to support Tern Island, does not have authority to conduct Extended Over Water Operations. The Ops Specs have a limitation that flight will be conducted not greater than 50NM from the major islands of Hawaii listed. This limitation is due to the aircraft, a PA-23-250, not having dual approved long range navigation system (LRNS) and dual long range communication systems (LRCS) installed. The PA23-250, N40370, does have a Garmin 430 (GPS), which is eligible for status as a LRNS. The second navigation system is a Garmin 155XL. This is a TSO'd GPS. While these dual systems are not approved to the status of LRNS, they provide all necessary performance for the safe conduct of this flight. Safety is not compromised in any manner. Additionally, a hand held portable GPS is available as backup. The PA-23-250, N40370, does have a single installed Sunair 850 synthesized tuning HF radio as a LRCS. A Kyocera Satellite Phone (Sat Phone) is available for emergency backup. The Sat Phone will be integrated into the aircraft avionics system in the near future. Dual VHF COMM radios are available for flight following over approximately ½ of the route flown. Safety is not compromised in any manner.
- C. 351 DM 3.3C requires that a Vendor Second In Command (SIC) shall be qualified in accordance with 14 CFR 135. Pearl Pacific Enterprises does not possess authority under its 135 Certificate to train or utilize an SIC. While the SIC utilized is not required by regulation, it is a most desirable risk mitigation feature. AM will review and accept the contractually required training program for the SIC. Safety will not be compromised as this office will evaluate and accept the training program in lieu of the FAA.

.5 Risk Assessment.

During the deliberations on the issuance of the request for exception, it was noted that the take off from Tern Island places the aircraft and its occupants in a significant risk environment for multiple bird strikes. Multiple bird strike could result in mechanical damage (during the takeoff phase) that could result in the loss of the aircraft and its occupants. This significant risk requires a measured and methodical assessment on the reasonableness of the use of aviation support at the Tern Island station. The Departmental Manual philosophy of an Aviation Safety Program identifies risk assessment as a responsibility of line management. In concert with that philosophy, this issuance exception to policy is predicated on the accomplishment and acceptance of a formal risk assessment on the Tern Island concerns. AM shall make available staff and assistance for this project at your convenience and request. After completion of the formal risk assessment it should be endorsed by line management at the Pacific Island Ecoregion and your Portland Regional Office. Upon endorsement by management, it shall be reviewed and accepted by the AM Safety Office.

Note: The Risk Assessment requested in the OPM of 2002 was completed and approved. In December 2005 the risk assessment was re-evaluated and the deficiencies noted were corrected. A current approved risk assessment is on file with AMD-AKRO.

Recommend Approval:

/s/ Harry J. Kielsing, Jr.
Regional Director

Approved:

/s/ Mark Bathrick
Associate Director

